

Message Text

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65

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7915

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 8013

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, US, TW

SUBJECT: LEGISLATIVE YUAN CANDIDATE CLAIMS USIS SUPPORT

1. ON DECEMBER 12 USIS BPAO KAOHSIUNG INFORMED EMBASSY TAIPEI THAT LIU TI-CHANG (0491/7555/4545), CITY EDITOR OF TAIWAN HSIN SHENG PAO, TOLD HIM THAT YEN MING-SHENG (7346/2494/5110), AN INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE FOR THE LEGISLATIVE YUAN FROM THE KAOHSIUNG AREA HAD BEEN CLAIMING IN PRIVATE RALLIES THAT USIS SUPPORTED HIS CANDIDACY AND THAT HIS SPEECHES WERE BEING TAPED AND SENT TO THE US. ACCORDING TO ANOTHER SOURCE, HENRY WEI (WEI YI-MIN, 7614/4135/3046), SPEAKING BEFORE THE KAOHSIUNG CITY COUNCIL, MADE SIMILAR CLAIMS ON YEN'S BEHALF.

2. LIU SUGGESTED THAT THE BPAO ISSUE A STATEMENT DENYING USIS SUPPORT FOR YEN. BPAO TOLD LIU THAT HE WOULD SEEK THE EMBASSY'S ADVICE ON HOW TO HANDLE THE MATTER.

3. ON THE EVEING OF DECEMBER 12 USIS TAIPEI PAO INSTRUCTED KAOHSIUNG BPAO TO DENY ORALLY USIS SUPPORT FOR ANY CANDIDATE RUNNING FOR ELECTION. HOWEVER, DUE TO A MISUNDERSTANDING BPAO KAOHSIUNG PROVIDED LIU A WRITTEN STATEMENT AS FOLLOWS:

4. BEGIN QUOTE: THE MISSION OF THE UNITED STATES INFORMATION SERVICE IS TO HELP PEOPLE IN OTHER COUNTRIES GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF AMERICAN CULTURE, POLITICS, ECONOMICS AND FOREIGN TRADE, AND ALSO TO HELP PEOPLE IN OTHER NATIONS GAIN
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A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH ALL MANKIND FACES,

SUCH AS POLLUTION AND THE WORLD ECONOMY. FOR VERY OBVIOUS REASONS, USIS CANNOT AND WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ANY COUNTRY, AND WE CERTAINLY CANNOT SUPPORT ANY PERSON OR ORGANIZATION IN ANY ELECTION IN ANY COUNTRY. END QUOTE.

5. VARIOUS LOCAL PRESS ACCOUNTS ON DECEMBER 15 REPORTED FULL OR PARTIAL TEXT OF BPAO KAOHSIUNG'S WRITTEN STATEMENT. APPARENTLY FOLLOWING THE LEAD OF THE CHINA NEWS AGENCY, SOME NEWSPAPERS CLAIMED THAT THE USIS STATEMENT WAS AIMED AT CLARIFYING RUMORS THAT A KAOHSIUNG CANDIDATE WHO VISITED THE US LAST YEAR AT THE INVITATION OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN RECEIVING STRONG SUPPORT FROM THE USG. (COMMENT: ONLY INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE CHUANG WEN-HUA, (5445/2429/2901), FITS THIS DESCRIPTION.) NONE OF THE PAPERS MENTIONED YEN, THE CANDIDATE AT WHOM THE STATEMENT WAS AIMED.

6. COMMENT: BASED ON CHUANG'S PAST RECORD, IT IS VERY POSSIBLE THAT HE HAS CLAIMED USG SUPPORT DURING HIS CAMPAIGN AND THAT THE PRESS THEREFORE DREW THE ERRONEOUS CONCLUSION THAT BPAO KAOHSIUNG'S STATEMENT WAS DIRECTED AT CHUANG. IT IS EQUALLY POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT PRO-KMT ELEMENTS IN THE PRESS WILLFULLY DECIDED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE STATEMENT TO DISCREDIT CHUANG, WHO IS ONE OF THE VERY FEW NON-INCUMBENT INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES WHO MAY HAVE A CHANCE OF WINNING A SEAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE YUAN ELECTION.

7. THE EMBASSY RECOGNIZES THAT SHOULD CHUANG NOW BE DEFEATED FOR WHATEVER REASON, INDEPENDENTS ARE LIKELY TO BLAME THE USG FOR INTERFERING IN THE CAMPAIGN AND BRINGING ABOUT HIS DEFEAT. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE IT WAS APPROPRIATE FOR BPAO KAOHSIUNG TO DENY ALLEGATIONS OF USIS SUPPORT FOR ANY CANDIDATE AND DOUBT THAT THE OUTCOME WOULD HAVE BEEN ANY DIFFERENT IF HE HAD MADE AN ORAL DENIAL RATHER THAN ISSUING A WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CLARIFICATION. GIVEN THE SENSITIVITY OF THIS ISSUE AND THE LIKELIHOOD THAT ANY FURTHER ATTEMPT TO CLARIFY IT MIGHT ALSO BE MISINTERPRETED, WE HAVE DECIDED THAT NO ONE IN USIS SHOULD MAKE ANY FURTHER COMMENT ON THE MATTER. UNGER

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